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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S DEVELOPMENT OF OFFENSIVE WEAPONS,
IRAQ, OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY ISSUE

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage from April 28-30 on the Taiwan authority's decision to reject China's proposed route for the 2008 Olympic torch relay; on the 3rd KMT-Communist Party of China forum held in Beijing on Sunday; and on the year-end legislative elections and the 2008 presidential election. The pro-status quo "China Times" front-paged a banner headline April 30 that read "Mainland [China] Upgrades Sovereignty Level; Trouble Arises Regarding Taiwan's [Policy] to Allow Chinese Tourists to Visit."

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" discussed the United States' attitude toward Taiwan's development of offensive weapons. The article said Washington is more concerned about the long-range ballistic missiles Taiwan is currently developing than the Hsiungfeng-2E cruise missiles that Taiwan has developed. An analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" said the United States' move to wait until the last moment to prevent Taiwan from deploying the Hsiungfeng-2E cruise missiles is a typical double-faced strategy based on its own interests. With regard to Iraq, an editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification "China Post" commented on the U.S. Congress's decision last week to ask the Bush administration to begin pulling out U.S. troops from Iraq. The article said "The Oct. 1, 2007 deadline means that the end is near, for Bush's war as well as for Bush himself." In terms of Olympic torch relay issue, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" said as a result of China's plan to belittle Taiwan, the island needs to be prepared not to participate in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" also said it is difficult to see how a compromise can be reached over the Olympic torch relay issue without either side backing down. A "China Times" editorial, however, urged Taiwan not to be absent from the Olympic Games. A separate editorial in the English-language "China Post" also chimed in by saying Taiwan's threat not to have its athletes participate in the Olympic Games is a foolish and dangerous proposition. End summary.

13. Taiwan's Development of Offensive Weapons

A) "Mystery behind [Taiwan's] Revelation of Its Offensive Weapons"

Mei Fu-hsing, director of the Taiwan Strait Security Research and Analysis Center, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (4/30):

"Regarding Taiwan's development of so-called 'offensive weapons,' the United States' fundamental attitude is that 'it will not proactively interfere as long as the weapons are not nuclear or biochemical.' This is because the U.S. military is also aware that Taiwan must be equipped with certain capabilities to attack specific ground targets of the People's Liberation Army, so that it can lift a siege [laid by the PLA] in the event of a cross-Strait conflict."

... But the United States' 'turning a blind eye' is built on the tacit agreement that [Taiwan] can 'only do it without saying it.' The Bush administration, which is already troubled by problems in the Mideast and North Korea and is thus in desperate need of China's cooperation, is getting increasingly annoyed by Taiwan politicians, whose occasional remarks about attacking mainland China with the island's self-produced missiles have triggered a reaction from Beijing and thus created unnecessary trouble for the United States' global strategic operations.

"The first time that Washington picked on Taiwan regarding this issue was in August 2006, when the Bush administration decided to disapprove tentatively a proposal by Taiwan's military to purchase F-16 C/D fighter jets. It was generally believed that Washington's decision not to sell the new fighter jets to Taiwan was a result of Taiwan's failure to pass the arms procurement budget as of then, which had been stalled for three years. But in reality, the U.S. authorities' other major concern was that it was hoping to use the disapproval to put pressure on Taiwan over the island's development of counterattack weapons. The United States' goals are: First, it wanted Taiwan's leaders to exercise restraint in terms of their words and deeds, and second, it wanted to force Taiwan to abandon its development of some sensitive counterattack weapons. ... Sources said that the United States is more concerned about the long-range ballistic missiles that Taiwan is still striving to develop than the Hsiungfeng-2E cruise missiles that Taiwan has already successfully developed. In this context, the ballistic missiles will most likely become the target that Washington wants to persuade Taiwan to abandon. ..."

B) "In Calling for a Halt when [the Missiles] Are about to be Deployed, the United States Is Using a Double-Faced Strategy"

Journalist Lu Teh-yun noted in an analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (4/30):

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"The U.S. National Security Council and the State Department plan to impose pressure to halt Taiwan's development and deployment of missiles that are capable of attacking mainland China. The plan by Taiwan's Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology to develop Hsiungfeng-2E cruise missiles has been going on for over six years. How is it possible that the United States was not aware of it? But the United States' decision to wait until the last moment to interrupt the plan was in reality a move made based on its own interests.

"The United States believes that, based on previous lessons it has learned, the Taiwan authorities, when dealing with the issue of unification and independence and cross-Strait disputes, tend to use words and deeds to provoke Beijing; Taiwan's pushing toward the outer limit [that Washington] can tolerate has got on the United States' nerves. Washington can never stop worrying in the face of the Taiwan authorities' calls for referenda, writing a new constitution, and [calling for] one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait

"What Washington cares about is that Taiwan has constantly tried to drag the United States into the [cross-Strait] quagmire, and that it intends to raise cross-Strait conflicts to the level of confrontation between Washington and Beijing. The United States believes that all Taiwan needs are defensive weapons that can help the island resist attacks from Beijing, and that the island might hit [China's] strategic locations or points once it is in possession of offensive weapons. This explains why the United States has been monitoring every move of Taiwan, including its development of offensive weapons and whether it has obtained nuclear weapons. ...

"The Hsiungfeng-2E cruise missiles developed by the Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology have a capability similar to that of the United States' Tomahawk missiles. The development of such missiles has been going on for six years, but the United States purposely overlooked it during this period of time. The fact that Washington waited until the critical moment when Taiwan is about to produce and deploy these missiles to stop the island is a typical

two-pronged strategy.

"History showed that the United States has previously stopped Taiwan from developing Tien Ma mid-range ballistic missiles and atomic bombs, and it also waited until these projects were about to succeed. In addition to its desire to dictate the regional strategic balance, Washington also intended to use Taiwan's developing capabilities as a bargaining chip to restrain Beijing. By demanding that Taiwan abandon its offensive weapons, Washington can ask Beijing to show some goodwill gestures. It can also drop a hint to Beijing that if the latter insists on threatening cross-strait peace, the United States does not need to launch Tomahawk missiles; it can simply let go and let Taiwan do whatever it pleases."

14. Iraq

"Checks and Balances"

The conservative, pro-unification "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/30):

"It is all but certain that President Bush will lose the war in Iraq, now that the Democrat-controlled Congress is determined to call it quits. A time table has been set for U.S. troops to pull out, contrary to the president's request for a surge. The U.S. Congress is working effectively to check Bush's power. ... The timetable is certain to doom President Bush's high-stakes gambles in Iraq. He succeeded only in taking out Saddam Hussein, but he will not be remembered as a victor. His dream for Iraq oil, which he had thought would pay for Iraq's post-war reconstruction, has turned into a nightmare. A democratic Iraq is now the killing fields of sectarian war. ...

"What can be expected is that President Bush will keep fighting, with his veto, against what a Republican senator called a surrender in Iraq. The Oct. 1, 2007 deadline means that the end is near, for Bush's war as well as for Bush himself. The days are numbered, so are the days of suffering and bloodshed. The U.S. Congress should get credit for doing its job well. Democracy works only when there are effective checks and balances. This week we have seen how democracy is working in the United States and why democracy is the worst political system except all others that have been experimented with from time to time, as so aptly described by Sir Winston Churchill."

15. Olympic Torch Relay Issue

A) "Taiwan Needs to Be Prepared Not to Participate in Beijing's IRAQ, OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY ISSUE

Olympic Games"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 500,000] editorialized (4/28):

"... Using the proposed [Olympic] torch route to belittle Taiwan is just the latest move in China's application of united-front tactics toward Taiwan in the [run-up to] Olympic Games. China's intention is evident: [Beijing's] arrangement for the torch to take a turn in the north and bypass Taiwan to arrive in Vietnam, and then to go from Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City to Taipei and to Hong Kong, Macau, and other inland cities of China was aimed at making Taipei the 'first stop of [China's] domestic route.' Also, its calling Taiwan 'China, Taipei' will also help reinforce the false image in the international community that Taiwan is a province of China. ..."

B) "Good Riddance to the Olympic Torch"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/28):

"The disingenuousness of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is breathtaking. To allow China to host an Olympics at all should have been warning enough; for IOC officials to now feign surprise at Taiwan's unhappiness with its proposed torch route suggests that there are still many feeble words and actions to come from them in the months to come. ... The presence of the torch was always going

to be 'political'; the real question was how the politics was going to be employed and whether an understanding was ever possible between Taipei and Beijing. ... It is difficult to see how a compromise can be reached without either side backing down, and neither side will be inclined to do so. ..."

C) Aborted [Olympic] Torch Relay [to Taiwan] Is a Small Matter, but [Taiwan's] Absence from the Olympic Games Will Be a Huge Issue"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (4/28):

"... It has been forty years since the Olympic torch last entered Taiwan. It will not be such a big loss for the island if the torch does not come to Taiwan this time. But what is really worth noting is whether Taiwan will decide not even to participate in the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Chances are that this could really happen, given the DPP government's manipulative approach in raising the [level of] confrontation between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. ... Perhaps there is little chance of making any change regarding the torch relay issue, but one must not allow political manipulation to sabotage [the island's] participation in the Olympic Games. ..."

D) "Torch Furor Getting Carried Away"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/29):

"... We support the principle of avoiding activities that diminish the status of our government and bolster Beijing's illegitimate claim of sovereignty over Taiwan. However, we strongly disagree with the way that President Chen Shui-bian and Premier Su Tseng-chang have distorted the Olympic torch relay route issue and

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turned it into an international controversy. ... If President Chan and his supporters did not want the Olympic torch to pass through Taiwan on its way to mainland China, we would have preferred to hear them simply say so. But warning the international community that Taiwan's athletes might not participate in the Olympic Games is a foolish and even dangerous proposition that could end up causing tremendous harm to us. ..."

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